

## Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

/062 W

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R 131449Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 033

INFO DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 1940

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CONTINUING REACTION TO UB SCANDAL AND GOH CHANGES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1882

BEGIN SUMMARY. COVERAGE OF THE UNITED BRANDS STORY IS INCREASING AS THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION RETURNS TO THE COUNTRY. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES BLAMING FORMER MINECON BENNATON AND DEFENDING LOPEZ ARE INCREASING AND ANACH PRESIDENT REYES RODRIGUEZ HAS EVEN CALLED FOR THE GENERAL'S RESTORATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AN EDITORIAL PRINTED MAY 8 BY EL DIA AN UNIDENTIFIED WRITER ASKS WHAT THE ARMED FORCES WILL DO IF LOPEZ IS FOUND TO BE FREE FROM INVOLVEMENT IN THE UB BRIBERY EPISODE. HE ASKS IF THE BRIBERY STORY WAS A FACTOR IN THE DECISION TO REMOVE LOPEZ, WHAT COMPENSATION WILL BE GIVEN  
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HIM IF HE'S INNOCENT?

2. EL CRONISTA OF MAY 9 PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL BY MEDARDO MEJIA ENTITLED, "NATIONALIZE UB IN HONDURAS." MEJIA

PRESENTS THE THESIS THAT THE USG IS CONTROLLED BY "THE GREAT TRUSTS" AND NOW IT CAN BE TRUTHFULLY SAID, " WHAT IS GOOD FOR UNITED BRANDS IS GOOD FOR THE US." IN REPORTING THE UB-HONDURAS BRIBERY STORY, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WAS NOT REVEALING A SECRET BUT ACTUALLY PARTICIPATING IN A POLITICAL MANEUVER OF THE TRUSTS OF WHICH IT IS A PART. "THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST ACTION AGAINST THE FEROCIOUS INTERNATIONAL MONOPOLIES, EXPLOITERS AND ENEMIES OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICAN SHOULD START IN HONDURAS" WHICH NOW HAS A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN THE BATTLE. "FORWARD. WITHOUT FEAR. NATIONALIZE UB."

3. EL DIA'S HEADLINE OF MAY 9 READS "CAMPEsinOS AND WORKERS WILL REQUEST THE RETURN OF LOPEZ." THE PAPER REPORTED GUSTAVO ZELAYA, PRESIDENT OF THE TEGUCIGALPA-BASED LABOR FEDERATION, RECESITLIH, AS SAYING THAT IF LOPEZ WERE CALLED BY THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL TO RESUME HIS POSITION AS CHIEF OF STATE, HE WOULD RECEIVE THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE WORKING CLASS. ZELZYA EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT MELGAR'S GOVERNMENT WOULD FOLLOW LOPEZ' POLICIES. EL DIA ALSO PUBLISHED REMARKS BY REYES RODRIGUEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST CAMPEsinO ORGANIZATION, ANACH. RODRIGUEZ REPORTEDLY SAID THAT LOPEZ CONTINUED TO BE THE LEADER OF THE ANACH CAMPEsinOS AND THAT THEY WOLD ASK FOR HIS POSITION OF CHIEF OF STATE TO BE RESTORED. HE WARNED MELGAR THAT IF HE TOOK DECISIONS "AGAINST THE PEOPLE" HE WOULD BE ACTIVELY OPPOSED BY THE CAMPEsinOS. RODRIGUEZ HAD MADE SIMILAR DECLARATIONS DURING A RADIO INTERVIEW THE PREVIOUS DAY.

4. EL DIA ALSO CITED "RELIABLE SOURCES" AS HAVING REPORTED THAT EX-MINECON BENNATON HAS PREPARED A SECRET DOCUMENT THAT WILL BE MADE PUBLIC BY A LAWYER IN CASE THERE IS AN ATTEMPT MADE ON HIS LIFE.

5. EL CRONISTA OF MAY 12 CARRIED HEADLINES READING, "LOPEZ AGREED TO GIVE POWER-OF-ATTORNEY TO MONSIGNOR SANTOS TO INVESTIGATE BANK ACCOUNT." IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, EL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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CRONISTA SAYS THAT WHEN THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION AECED FOR A POWER-OF-ATTORNEY FROM LOPEZ AUTHORIZING THE EXAMINATION OF HIS BANK ACCOUNTS, HE REFUSED BECAUSE SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION HAD POLITICAL REASONS TO USE THE INFORMATION AGAINST HIM. HOWEVER, HE OFFERED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO GIVE SUCH AUTHORITY TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF TEGUCIGALPA. MONSIGNOR HECTOR SANTOS, A COMMISSION MEMBER. THIS COMPROMISE WAS REFUSED. EL CRONISTA ALSO SAYS THAT THE MIAMI MEETING IN AUGUST BETWEEN UB EXECUTIVE JOHNSON AND EX-MINECON BENNATON IS A CONFIRMED FACT. THE PAPER ADDS THAT MOST OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS WILL ARRIVE IN HONDURAS TODAY, MAY 12 AND THAT THEIR DRAFT REPORT IS ALREADY PREPARED.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THERE IS A  
PRESS CAMPAIGN DEVELOPING WHICH IS ATTEMPTING TO PLACE  
LOPEZ AND HIS ACTIONS IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT. THE  
MAJOR THRUST OF THE EFFORT IS TO PLACE THE BLAME ON THE  
MANUEVERING OF THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION RATHER THAN  
ON THE GOH OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE BRIBE. REYES  
RODRIGUEZ" COMMENTS WERE THE MOST OUTSPOKEN CALLING FOR  
LOPEZ" RETURN. SUCH STATEMENTS CAN DO LITTLE BUT DAMAGE  
REYES RODRIGUEZ AND ANACH IN THE EYES OF THE LT. COLONELS.  
SANCHEZ

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**To:** STATE INFO DIA  
USIA  
GUATEMALA  
MANAGUA  
SAN JOSE  
SAN SALVADOR

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